

REMARKS

This response responds to the Office Action dated January 5, 2004 in which the Examiner rejected claims 6-10, 17 and 20-23 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e), rejected claims 11-16 under 35 U.S.C. §103 and objected to claims 18-19 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim but would be allowable is rewritten in independent form.

Attached to this Response is a copy of a Certified Translation of the Priority Document for the present application which claims priority of October 26, 1998. Applicants respectfully point out to the Examiner that *Nabeshima et al.* (U.S. Patent No. 6,587,224) has a U.S. filing date of September 14, 1999 which is after the priority date of October 26, 1998 of the present application. Therefore, *Nabeshima et al.* is not a proper reference. Applicants respectfully request the Examiner withdraws the rejection to claims 6-10, 17 and 20-23 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e), withdraws the rejection to claims 11-16 under 35 U.S.C. §103 and withdraws the objection to claims 18-19.

The prior art of record, which is not relied upon, is acknowledged. The references taken singularly or in combination do not anticipate or make obvious the claimed invention.

Thus it now appears that the application is in condition for reconsideration and allowance. Reconsideration and allowance at an early date are respectfully requested.

If for any reason the Examiner feels that the application is not now in condition for allowance, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner contact, by

telephone, the Applicants' undersigned attorney at the indicated telephone number to arrange for an interview to expedite the disposition of this case.

In the event that this paper is not timely filed within the current set shortened statutory period, Applicant respectfully petitions for an appropriate extension of time. The fees for such extension of time may be charged to our Deposit Account No. 02-4800.

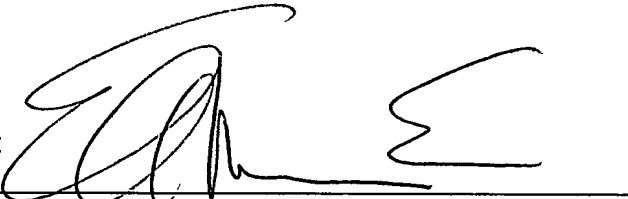
In the event that any additional fees are due with this paper, please charge our Deposit Account No. 02-4800.

Respectfully submitted,

BURNS, DOANE, SWECKER & MATHIS, L.L.P.

Date: April 1, 2004

By:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'EMAS', written over a horizontal line.

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